

# ANNUAL REPORT

**2025**

POETRY

**EDITOR**

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JON LEON  
NEW YORK CITY

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## The Magic of the Movies

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Gridlocked traffic in angel city  
A sudden headache nails through

my brain's mealy face  
like a rug snapping  
like an oracle's blessed separation

Suddenly an oracle  
blesses me with separation  
She flickers when the reels  
switch and recites my own  
death's county and state

Forty yards further men shoot chase scenes  
Woundpaint scuffs the median

She traces two words  
against the sky's uglycrying  
blue, abusive face  
and the first word's *SNUFF*  
and the last word drips

down off its post  
pooling to my windshield  
viscous with abject desire

*Caitlin Lorraine  
Johnson*

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scene luminescence

vs

light

*Francisco  
Orozco  
trans. Kent  
Johnson*

## **Bickar Munoz**

---

Cuando paso a la orilla de la fábrica CHAMORRO INDUSTRIAL  
y cuando estuvimos dentro en aquella recuperación de dinero  
y los empujones a los celadores  
el amarre  
la búsqueda de dinero  
las pintas que puse en las paredes  
la M-3 en tus manos confiadas  
la serenidad  
tu firmeza al momento de gritar:

Nadie se mueva somos del FSLN.

Todo fue silencio.  
Lo hacíamos por Nuestro pueblo  
por esos obreros que manejaban las máquinas.  
Bickar,  
así se hizo el operativo que llamamos  
Obreros y Campesinos al Poder.

## Bickar Munoz

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*Francisco  
Orozco  
trans. Kent  
Johnson*

When I pass by the “Chamorro Industrial” factory  
I remember when we were on the inside, liberating the money,  
pushing back the security guards,  
tying their hands,  
the search for the cash,  
the slogans I spray-painted on the wall,  
the M-3 in your trusted hands,  
your poise,  
your determined voice shouting:  
Nobody move—we’re from the FSLN!  
Everything became hushed.  
We did it for our people,  
for the workers who made those machines run.  
Bickar,  
that was how we carried out the operation called  
“Workers and Peasants to Power.”

## Crème de la Crème

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*Cristine Brache*

Communism  
is  
a  
capitalist  
fantasy;

Capitalism  
is  
a  
communist  
fantasy.

## Sky Rose Hotel

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*Daniel Feinberg*

Let me say it clearly  
my idea is contra talmudic romantic longing  
as some windswept sweep stakes substitute for inherent infinite grief  
like long beach metal music about spiritual pain  
like tie dying on the droned terrace  
we should be amateurs  
with olive oils.

Your hands, jazz hands.  
Your throat, deep space.

*A bag of air.*



## **Roses Bricks Blood**

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I'm somewhere but idk where  
maybe an elevator  
rising in freefall  
daniel says poetry's  
a bird  
next to a plane  
I think it's a bird  
inside a turbine  
during the desire paths symposium  
ben said networking's important  
but no man's a failure  
who has friends  
I think I see a girl  
seeing JFK  
for the last time  
there are some faces you don't know

will love again  
I have had a hard time  
asking for water  
at restaurants  
there are those  
who remember everything  
au pied de cochon  
you telling me about the class  
you were taking on  
the myth of romance  
me getting up from the table  
and going to the bathroom  
and pretending to faint  
to break the infinity mirror

## **You swap yourself and anything good for coolness**

---

And you don't realise you're doing it  
or how it could be detrimental  
grown up Berghain cool kids in their late 30s grow to say things like "cool is  
cringe"  
what can you do with that?  
Switch objectives and step out  
Remember:  
Badlands

## The Foxes

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*Sophia*

*Georghiou*

One lies on the pavement  
paws furred anus out

sexless in furs  
a napping husband

the other split  
open in the road

a community of  
flies fleshing out

the intestines a few  
nervous virgins

sulking over  
the mottle.

Your final days fed  
through a tube

pupils flitting  
as my father

and I speak  
to you

in mother  
tongue

like two

cheap nurses.

The night I'm told  
of your passing

I'm tugged from sleep  
the foxes' guttural

shriek senseless  
fucking I spend hours

online looking  
at photos

of skin decay  
the stages:

from fresh  
to bloat

leather  
to bone.

I dream of the night  
you graced the street

in nothing  
but a nightie

Greek guts  
spilling over.

*Garett Strickland*

## **In the Skullifornia Offices Are We Watching Skullivision**

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THE SUN THRU the skylight highlights the paraphernalia table, we around it, staring each of us past the other opposite at whatever screen is mounted on the wall behind, the little fire in the center pit dancing its tableaux to us unobserved.

Middle Basement Studios just got a brand new satellite and this excites us. Most often as not we all of us are peeping the feed of the mounted camera angled view of the surface of the earth in its orbit. We watch and we dream up ideas for our singular quality programming.

## Outcast

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*Claude McKay*

For the dim regions whence my fathers came  
My spirit, bonded by the body, longs.  
Words felt, but never heard, my lips would frame;  
My soul would sing forgotten jungle songs.  
I would go back to darkness and to peace,  
But the great western world holds me in fee,  
And I may never hope for full release  
While to its alien gods I bend my knee.  
Something in me is lost, forever lost,  
Some vital thing has gone out of my heart,  
And I must walk the way of life a ghost  
Among the sons of earth, a thing apart.

For I was born, far from my native clime,  
Under the white man's menace, out of time.

## Contributors

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**PJ Lombardo** is a writer from New Jersey. He has previously worked for Action Books, published a chapbook called *Hate, Dance* in 2024 and co-founded *GROTTO*, a journal of grotesque-surrealist poetry. Read his writing in *Spectra Poets*, *Tagvverk*, *Tripwire Journal*, the *Brooklyn Rail* and elsewhere.

**Caitlin Lorraine Johnson** is a poet and arts writer based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her work has appeared in *Southwest Contemporary*, *BOMB*, *Des Pair Quarterly*, *Artist Field*, and elsewhere. She has also contributed exhibition texts for The Valley, Night Gallery, and Albertz Benda. Her first book, *IO*, is now available from Economy Press.

**Francisco Orozco** (†) was a member of the People's Sandinista Army. The poem included here was composed in the Poetry Workshop of the Third Military Region. It is selected from the section 'Poems from The *Talleres* in the Revolution: 1979—' published in the book *A Nation of Poets: Writings from the Poetry Workshops of Nicaragua*, trans. with an Introduction by Kent Johnson (Los Angeles: West End Press, 1985). The publisher's copyright notice states, "Permission is granted for republication of up to 1/3 of the contents of this book in other publications in the United States."

**Kent Johnson** (1955-2022) worked in Nicaragua in 1980 and 1983, as a teacher in the National Literacy Campaign and as an adult education instructor. He has revisited the country since then, gathering these poems and interviewing members of the Sandinista government, including Father Ernesto Cardenal, poet and Minister of Culture. (From the publisher's original 1985 Translator bio.)

**Cristine Brache** is an artist, writer, and filmmaker living and working in New York. She received her MFA in Fine Art Media from the Slade School of Fine Art (London, UK). Her work has been exhibited internationally at galleries and institutions like Berlinische Galerie and ICA Miami and critically reviewed in places such as *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. Her second collection of poetry entitled, *Goodnight Sweet Thing*, was published by anonymous gallery in 2024.

**Daniel Feinberg** is a poet living in Marseille France. His recent book *Some Sun* is out on If A Leaf Falls Press, 2024.



**Ulyses Razo's** poems have appeared in *Hobart*, *ShitWonder*, *SARKA*, *Amygdala Journal*, and elsewhere. He is the author of *Murders & Other Poems* (Ghost City Press, 2024) and lives in London.

**Holly Childs** is a writer and artist based in Naarm Melbourne. Their work focuses on the shifting mechanisms of storytelling in a time when physical matter is constantly being reshaped, recontextualised, and rewritten by emerging crises, trends, and technologies.

**Sophia Georghiou** is an Italian-Greek poet. Her poems have featured in Wonder Press, Poets Versus Sexual Harassment: An Anthology x UN Women, the6ress, Spectra Poets and Dream Boy Book Club. She was the winner of James Massiah's Party Poetry Prize in 2020, shortlisted for the Bridport Prize in 2021 and recently longlisted for the 2025 Pat Kavanagh Prize. She has an MA in Creative and Life Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London.

**Garett Strickland** is a writer, artist, & composer currently based in the American middle west. He is the author of *Ungula* and *A Place Beyond*, published from Inside the Castle. He is the director of Dromedary Productions in St. Paul, MN.

**Claude McKay** (1889-1948) was an important Jamaican-American author of poetry and prose associated with the Harlem Renaissance. "Outcast" is in the public domain.

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